



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Acceptance of new fuel excise rebate system by NFF a cop-out Time for Corish to declare his political intentions

Member for New England, Tony Windsor, has criticised the National Farmers Federation (NFF) for compromising its membership in its support of a 2 year reprieve for farmers in terms of the way fuel excise rebates are claimed and has called on NFF President Peter Corish to declare his political intentions.

The Government had planned to scrap the current E-card, phone or internet instant rebate process from July 1 making farmers claim their rebates through the BAS of which the NFF through its President Peter Corish had been critical.

Mr Windsor said that the underlying problem remains.

“In 2 years time, farmers will be obliged to pay a tax on fuel at point of sale and then wait up to 90 days for the tax to be reimbursed through the Business Activity Statement (BAS) system.

The absurdity of the fuel tax arrangements is that farmers will pay a tax (38c/litre) that they don't owe (because they are exempt) then wait 90 days to be reimbursed a tax they don't owe in the first place.

This is an issue that could have been solved if the NFF had held the line.

For Mr Corish, on behalf of the NFF, to now claim some sort of victory when all they have done is delay the application of the Federal Government's agenda to the long term detriment of their members is at best a cop-out,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that ironically, NFF President Peter Corish says in his press release, “While welcoming the phase in arrangements, Australian farmers will justifiably question why, if the Australian Tax Office (ATO) can manage a flexible claim system over the next two years, this flexibility cannot be a permanent feature of the fuel tax credit system?”

“Exactly Mr Corish – farmers will ask that question and they should also ask why the NFF has become a lapdog of the Commonwealth Government.

In 2 years, farmers will face exactly the same compliance and cash flow problems that their organisation criticised last week.

This is an issue that the NFF should have dug in on.

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There's no disadvantage to the government through loss of tax income.

It is purely an administration issue that will disadvantage the farm sector already stretched enough through drought and prices so why is the NFF accepting a 2 year reprieve as a successful outcome?

Perhaps it's time for NFF President Peter Corish to declare his political intentions for after his term comes to an end," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor is disappointed that country Government MPs have even allowed this piece of legislation to get to the floor of the Parliament.

"It is a disgrace that country Government MP's have allowed this legislation through the joint party room and the 2 year reprieve should only be seen as a hollow victory of the Nationals over the Liberals," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said he would be continuing with his amendment to the legislation on behalf of those affected by the changes.

"It is a great shame that those who ranted against the changes have now become complicit in accepting them," Mr Windsor said.